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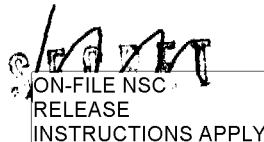
FM THE SITUATION ROOM TONK 211

TO BOLMAN/LOPD FOR DR. KISSINGER

ZEM

S E C R E T SENSITIVE EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY 0000074

TONK 211



Sanitized Copy
NSC letter 1/18/08
3.3(b)(1)
EO 12958 as amended

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Z 161300Z FEB 73 ZYH

FM VIENTIANNE

TO WHITE HOUSE

S E C R E T 161208Z DEFE 73 VIA [REDACTED]

WHITE HOUSE PLEASE PASS STATE DEPARTMENT FOR ASSISTANT
SECRETARY GREEN ONLY

FROM: AMBASSADOR GODLEY 708 FLASH

TO: WHITE HOUSE EYES ONLY FOR DR. KISSINGER
BANGKOK FOR AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN ONLY

1. THE POLITICAL POT IS BOILING. IN ADDITION TO THE INTRANSIGENT REFUSAL OF THE PATHET LAO TO COMPROMISE ON SOME OF THE OUTSTANDING ISSUES, SOUVANNA NOW FINDS HIMSELF SHARPLY ATTACKED BY THE RIGHT FOR NEGOTIATING AN AGREEMENT WHICH THE RIGHTISTS CONSIDER A SELLOUT. AT YESTERDAY'S CABINET MEETING SOUVANNA INFORMED THE CABINET MEMBERS OF THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT. AT THAT MEETING THE RIGHTISTS EXPRESSED THEIR DISSATISFACTION WITH THE AGREEMENT, PARTICULARLY THE PROVISION FOR A FIFTY-FIFTY SPLIT IN THE FORMATION OF A FUTURE COALITION GOVERNMENT.

2. AT LAST NIGHT'S DINNER FOR BILL SULLIVAN AT WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER AND SOME OF HIS KEY CABINET MEMBERS WERE IN ATTENDANCE, THE RIGHTISTS AGAIN VOICED THEIR DISPLEASURE OVER MANY ITEMS IN THE AGREEMENT WITHOUT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONING THEIR CONCERN OVER THE COMPOSITION OF A FUTURE GOVERNMENT. THEY PARTICULARLY CRITICIZED THE PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS FOR FAILURE TO DIVORCE A MILITARY CEASEFIRE FROM POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. THE PRIME MINISTER AND PHENG PHONGSAVAN TRIED TO EXPLAIN THAT THE PATHET LAO HAD NOT REPEAT NOT AGREED TO SEPARATING THESE TWO ISSUES. THEREFORE THE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE TAKEN THE TRACK WE KNOW.

3. IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE TERMS OF A CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT THE PRIME MINISTER SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE WISE TO DELAY A SETTLEMENT AND CONTINUE FIGHTING, BUT FOR THAT ALTERNATIVE HE WOULD NEED FIRM ASSURANCES OF CONTINUED US AIR SUPPORT FOR AT LEAST THE NEXT THIRTY DAYS EQUAL TO THE LEVEL WE SUPPLIED OVER THE LAST WEEK. HE REPLIED THAT WE COULD NOT BE SURE HOW LONG WE CAN PROVIDE THIS LEVEL OF US AIR SUPPORT AND THAT THERE WAS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT AFTER THIRTY DAYS THE PLE WOULD BE MORE WILLING TO OFFER MORE FAVORABLE TERMS. BOTH BILL SULLIVAN AND I HAVE STRESSED WITH THE RIGHTIST LEADERS, IN PARTICULAR MINISTER SISOUK, NOT TO ROCK THE BOAT AT THIS SENSITIVE MOMENT. WE ALSO STRESSED THAT THE US WANTS AN EARLY CEASEFIRE ON HONORABLE TERMS IN LAOS AND TOWARDS THAT END YOU HAD TRIED TO OBTAIN ASSURANCES FROM THE NORTH VIETNAMESE LEADERS. THE RIGHTIST LEADERS PRESENT AT THE DINNER WERE PERTURBED BY THE ASSURANCES THE NORTH VIETNAMESE GAVE YOU THAT THE PATHET LAO WOULD ACCEPT TO SEPARATE A MILITARY CEASEFIRE FROM A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. SOUVANNA AND PHENG POINTED OUT HOWEVER, THAT DESPITE THESE ASSURANCES THE PATHET LAO

HAVE NOT BEEN
NEGOTIATIONS.

4. SOUVANNA WAS VISIBLY IRRITATED BY HIS FAILURE TO
EXTRACT CONCESSIONS FROM PHOUMI AND THE CARPING OF THE
~~RIGHT AND LEFT WING - FOR THE~~ *NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN CHA*
5. ~~AT THIS MORNING'S (FEBRUARY 16) EXTRAORDINARY CABINET~~
MEETING, SISOUK SEVERELY CRITICIZED THE PRIME MINISTER FOR
NOT SEPARATING THE TWO ISSUES. HE ALSO ATTACKED THE FIFTY-
FIFTY FORMULA AND SOUVANNA'S ALLEGED STATEMENT THAT IF
THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT THERE WOULD BE ONLY ONE VICE PRIME
MINISTER, NAMELY SOUPHANNOUVONG, AND NO VICE PRIME MINISTER
REPRESENTING THE RIGHT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT SOUVANNA WAS
SO ULTERATED BY THESE ATTACKS THAT HE THREATENED TO RESIGN.

6. SINCE SOUVANNA REMAINS THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN A
SETTLEMENT IN LAOS AND IN ORDER TO AVOID A SITUATION WHICH
RISKS TURNING LAOS INTO ANOTHER CAMBODIA, BILL SULLIVAN
TOLD THE PRIME MINISTER PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE OF (A)
CONTINUED STRONG US SUPPORT FOR SOUVANNA'S LEADERSHIP;
(B) US WANTS AN EARLY CEASEFIRE IN LAOS; (C) WE PREFER
TO SEPARATE MILITARY FROM POLITICAL ISSUES BUT SOUVANNA
IS BEST JUDGE OF WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED IN NEGOTIATIONS
WITH PATHET LAO; (D) THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE ASSURED US
IN HANOI THAT THE LAOS CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT WOULD NOT
INCLUDE REFERENCE TO THE UNITED STATES AND THIS SHOULD
BE REFLECTED IN FINAL AGREEMENT; (E) THE POLITICAL ASPECTS
OF A SOLUTION ARE STRICTLY INTERNAL LAO MATTER TO BE
RESOLVED BY THE LAO THEMSELVES.

7. WHEN DEAN AND I SAW SOUVANNA LATE AFTERNOON 16TH,
I REITERATED SAME POINTS MADE BY BILL. SOUVANNA SAID THAT
SISOUK IS OVERLY EXCITED, UNREALISTIC BUT ATTRIBUTED THIS
TO HIS YOUNG AGE. SOUVANNA APPRECIATED OUR ASSURANCES FOR
HIS SUPPORT AT THIS DELICATE MOMENT. HE PLANS TO MEET
AGAIN WITH PHOUMI AND PHENG TOMORROW MORNING TO DETERMINE
WHETHER REMAINING DIFFERENCES CAN BE BRIDGED. HE ALSO
SAID THAT THE LPP DEMAND FOR A VICE PRIME MINISTERSHIP
FOR SOUPHANNOUVONG COULD PROBABLY BE TURNED BACK IN
FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS, AND THERE WOULD BE NO VICE PRIME
MINISTERS. THE CONSTITUTION PERMITS THE CREATION OF THAT
POSITION BUT DOES NOT REQUIRE THAT IT BE FILLED. FURTHER-
MORE, THE NEXT GOVERNMENT IS ONLY TEMPORARY AND WHAT
REALLY COUNTS ARE THE NEW ELECTIONS FOR THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY. IF THE NON-COMMUNISTS CAN STICK TOGETHER BY
PUTTING UP A SINGLE SLATE AGAINST THE PATHET LAO AND
THEREBY WIN THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS, THE REPRESENTATION OF
THE PATHET LAO IN A PERMANENT GOVERNMENT COULD BE
DRASTICALLY REDUCED.

8. INDIVIDUALS ARE TAKING EXTREME POSITIONS AND EMOTIONS ARE
HIGH. AFTER OUR MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER, I AM HOWEVER CONFIDENT
THAT HIS REFERENCE TO HIS RESIGNATION WAS MERELY A THREAT TO BRING
BOTH THE RIGHT AND THE LEFT INTO LINE WITH A SETTLEMENT ALONG THE
LINES HE HAS BEEN WORKING.

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